

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-4, 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McCune in U.S. Patent No. 3,139,704. Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCune in U.S. Patent No. 3,139,704 in view of Muta in U.S. Patent No. 4,216,738.

Claim 1 as previously amended claims a method for clearing pipes used for conveying flowable material of the flowable material conveyed in said pipes

McCune provides a method of removing deposits in pipes, particularly those adhering to the walls. Column 2, lines 30-57, referred to by the Examiner, state that the line is preliminarily cleared by the application of a gas or air under pressure to blow out loose debris and the use of a pipeline pig to mechanically scrape or clear loosely attached matter from the interior of the pipe as well as remove any remaining debris or fluid which may be in the line (emphasis added).

Clearly, McCune is presented with an essentially empty pipe, with just some debris which may or may not be attached to the walls.

The present invention starts from a pipe which is full of the material it is used to convey, whether that is oil, crude or light, orange juice, soda drink concentrate or whatever. This is not loose debris. McCune does not teach clearing a pipe of its

content of flowable material. McCune enters the process of the invention at step 2, namely, when substantially all the contents have already been cleared.

Having said that, McCune contemplates rehabilitating gas pipelines. Gas is, of course, a flowable material, though not of the sort contemplated in connection with the present invention, which is concerned with essentially liquids. Claim 1 has been amended by qualifying 'material' as 'liquid material', and this completely differentiates from McCune, and to further specify that at the beginning of step 1, the pipe is full or essentially full of the liquid material. The invention is not primarily a method for cleaning or rehabilitating pipes, it is a step in a manufacturing process.

It is actually not an obvious thing to apply air at one end of a pipe and hope to clear out the contents of a full pipe. The conventional way of doing this is by means of a pig. The inventive technique has been displayed, using transparent pipe sections, and the liquid has been moved through the pipe simply by air - it even moves vertically upwards.

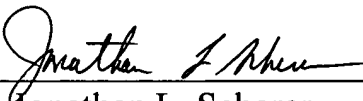
Using a pig to clear a pipe of, say, food such as soup or beverages such as orange juice, means that the entire pipe contents has to be sent to waste. A soft drink manufacturer may save two million dollars annually just by being able to use the pipeful of product when changing from orange juice, say, to lemon barley water.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the present application, as they now stand, patentably distinguish over the references cited and applied by the Examiner and are, therefore, in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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